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County will redraft rules for mixed development

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County officials are starting from scratch to draft a proposal that would allow mixed-use developments in Spartanburg, and the new version should be completed by January.

At Spartanburg County Council's Monday meeting, Angela Viney said members of Upstate Forever hoped the new proposal would be clearer than the first. The director of Upstate Forever's Spartanburg office, speaking during a public hearing, said the new ordinance should encourage planners to build the neo-urban projects. The original proposal was a step in the right direction, Viney said, but was confusing and intimidating.

A Dec. 14 memo to county council from Upstate Forever stated that "a planned development ordinance should be written to encourage such developments by making the process straightforward and easy to understand.

"The initial draft amendment, which we understand has been revoked, appeared to be quite daunting in terms of its length and many approval steps."

First draft was complicated

Earlier this month, at a public hearing of the county's planning commission, Darrell Hinson applauded the county's efforts to allow developers to start building these types of projects in unincorporated Spartanburg County but was among several developers who expressed concerns about the complicated original draft.

On Monday, Hinson appeared before county council and again applauded the county for being proactive.

"We also would like to be involved in that planning process as builders and developers," Hinson said.

Builders and developers in the county recommend that the county planning commission be more involved in drafting the new ordinance than it was in pulling together the original ordinance, he said.

Under the original draft proposal, every planned subdivision with mixed-use elements would have had to be approved by county council, as well as the county planning commission, Hinson said. That would have dragged out each project's timeline.

"It's our desire that subdivisions be reviewed and approved by the planning commission," Hinson said.

Assistant County Administrator Chris Story said county planners and administrators would work with builders and developers in the coming weeks to draft proposed revisions to the county's Unified Land Management Ordinance that would have a more solid legal foundation and clearer steps.

"We're going to retune the whole guitar," Story said.

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